
Subject: Re: Object Graphics

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 12 May 2004 19:39:53 GMT

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Michael Wallace writes:

>> Aside from RSI's literature, the only book I know of is Ronn Kling's "Power
>> Graphics with IDL". This is a good introductory text.

>

> I located this book, but I can't seem to find any information on it
> other than the book exists and you can buy it. What is the general
> community opinion of the book? Do you buy the book because it is the
> only one which covers object graphics? Or do you buy it because it is a
> very useful companion for the object graphics programmer?

I learned how to write object graphics programs the old fashioned way: I spent weeks and weeks making random changes to my programs until something--anything--appeared in my display window, then bootstrapped my way up from there. I could have really used this book. :-)

This book does not claim to be the final word on object graphics. It is strictly an introduction to the subject and it does that very well, I think. I don't know how anyone learns how to use object graphics from the documentation RSI provides. You will quickly outgrow this book when you start writing sophisticated programs, but you will have saved yourself months of hard slogging and will make faster progress by having a context for additional learning.

> Also, how old is the book? And the related question, how much has
> object graphics changed since it was written? Basically, how out of
> date is it?

My book has an August 2002 publication date. I don't know if it has been updated since then. As far as I can see from leafing through it, everything in it is still relevant and up-to-date. I get it out every couple of months or so to look something or other up in it.

> I've done limited work with OpenGL and some with Java3D (which is Java
> wrappers above OpenGL), so I'm familiar with the concepts used in the
> graphics. My problem is that I'm having quite a time trying to figure
> out how IDL has "wrapped" the OpenGL underneath. The IDL -> OpenGL
> mapping is what I meant by wanting to understand "what's going on inside
> the object graphics system."

The book I've found most helpful with respect to understanding

the underlying OpenGL is `_Computer Graphics: Using Open GL_` by F.S. Hill, Jr. Very readable and understandable. And it makes you appreciate just what RSI has done in bringing us object graphics. :-)

<http://tinyurl.com/3x8u4>

Cheers,

David

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